

EGGS HATCH IN 12 TO 24 HOURS.—In the open air, with other conditions favorable, the egg requires only one or two days to germinate into an embryo or tiny larva. This larva bursts forth from its encasing shell and begins feeding. Rapidly developing in size, it, within a week, twice sheds its skin, the new skin forming underneath the original one. The second skin is detached from practically the entire body surface, but remains about the larva as a protecting sheath.

REQUIRES A WEEK TO REACH INFECTIVE STAGE.—*At this stage of its development the worm is still too small to be seen with the unaided eye;* in fact, many of them could live in a single drop of water and yet not be crowded. Reaching this period in its life cycle, it is known as the encysted larva. As such it takes in no more food, and grows no more, but possesses remarkable vitality. It will live thus six weeks, perhaps nine months. This little larva has reached what is known as the infective stage.

In order to continue life and develop further, it must enter the body of a human being—its host—and find its way to the intestinal canal, for only there can adult life be reached.

MODES OF INFECTION.

CONTAMINATED FOOD OR WATER MAY CARRY INFECTION.—Early writers held that the infecting larva was swallowed with contaminated water or food. Celery, lettuce, radishes, strawberries or other fruits might carry the larva, yet one's eyes could not see the tiny enemy. Thus a person may, unknowingly, swallow it and become infected. The hands of a child may make mud pies of polluted soil and, without being washed, carry bread to the child's mouth. At present, infection through the mouth is regarded as occurring much less frequently than through the skin.

SKIN INFECTION VERY COMMON.—*The common mode of infection is known to be through the skin.*

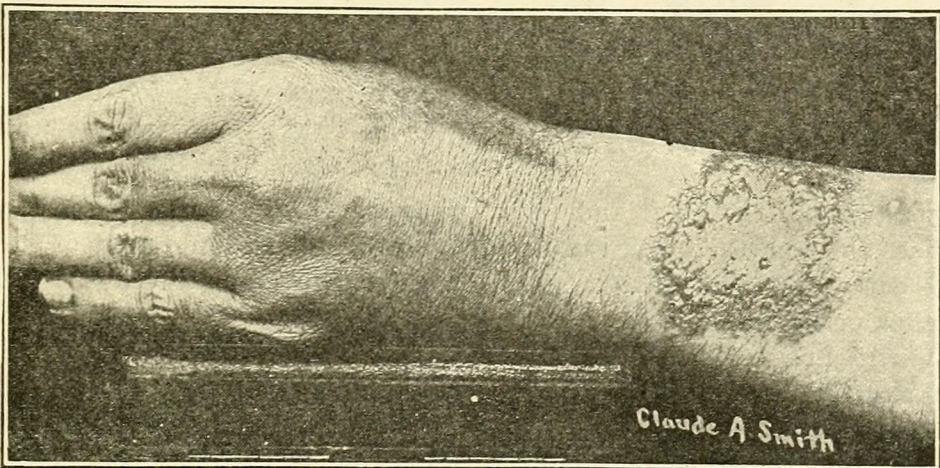


FIGURE 5. Experimental Hookworm Infection. Shows confluent vesicle (blister) formation with slight decrease of swelling. (Photograph furnished by Dr. Claude A. Smith. Courtesy of C. V. Mosby Pub. Co.)